

State of Michigan  
Family & Human Services - Senate Committee Meeting: 2/3/2009  
**Chair: Senator Mark Jansen**  
**Members: Senator Bill Hardiman, Senator Gilda Jacobs**  
**Room 210, Farnum Building**  
**125 W. Allegan, Lansing, MI**

**Presenter: Debora Matthews**  
**CEO-The Children's Center of Wayne County (313-262-0941)**  
**Board Member & Treasurer-The Michigan Federation**

**Outline of Comments (3-5 minutes):**

- **Brief History of The Children's Center – Providing mental health services for 80 years / providing Child Welfare services for about 25 years. We have historically provided additional supports for our clients based on their individual needs, over and beyond contract requirements.**
- **Affiliation with The Michigan Federation – proud members for over 5 years.**
- **Thanks to DHS leadership and staff for their cooperation and hard work in implementing the lawsuit settlement provisions.**
- **Thanks to Senators and other legislative leaders who have been supportive of private agencies' role in providing child welfare services to children, youth, and families in our State who are in out-of-home placement.**
- **Private agencies are happy to be partners with the Department in providing excellent services to children, youth, and families and look forward to continued collaboration to exceed the requirements of the lawsuit settlement and make Michigan the national model of excellence in child welfare: keeping children safe and moving them to permanency in record time.**
- **Private Agency challenges in implementing the "very positive" lawsuit settlement mandates:**
  - **Reduced caseload sizes, increased supervision of staff, and appropriate training mandates require financial resources.**
  - **Mandated trainings for new staff that must be obtained prior to assigning caseload work to them, requires financial resources and availability of training courses.**
  - **Licensing requirements for relatives may be problematic and require additional support/training for responsible staff.**
- **Support of ongoing collaboration between private agencies, legislative leaders, the State Department, and the community.**